2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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115 owe much, not only for the many bark baskets and paintings they made, but also for the wealth of information they so courteously imparted to me about the creation of their world, their totemic ancestors and the philosophies of their people.

These two old men are the storehouses of the tribal beliefs and philosophies. As the younger men are no longer taking a deep interest in their tribal lore, the passing of *Tjamalumpua* and *Malumerinia* will be an irreparable loss to the aborigines of Melville Island.

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[178]

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tobacco, *b*, matches, *c*, a pipe, *d*, a calico loin cloth, *e*, a pair of short trousers, *f*, a shirt, *g*, sugar, *h*, tea, and *j*, flour.

Secular

Fig. 6D is a carved stick whose designs were thought out by the artist as he walked along the sandy beach near our camp. Although not a message stick, the illustration is included in the section as an example of how an aboriginal expresses his mental images through the medium of simple wood carving.

The horizontal lines, *a*, *a*, symbolize the waves breaking on the beach, and the groups of short lines, a pattern of shallow gutters which had been formed on the sandy shore by the fresh water seeping from a nearby lagoon.

10. THE BURIAL POLES

The painted and decorated poles of Melville and Bathurst Islands attracted the attention of all the early visitors. Sir Gordon Bremer in 1824, possibly the first European to see the *pukamuni* poles, when writing about a grave he saw on Melville Island, states: "The situation was one of such perfect retirement and repose that it displayed considerable feeling in the survivors who placed it there and the simple order which pervaded the spot would not have disgraced a civilised people. It was an oblong square open at the foot, the remaining end and sides being railed around with trees, 7 feet to 8 feet high, some of which were carved with stone or shell and further ornamented by rings of wood. On the tops of these were placed the waddies (throwing sticks) of the deceased. The grave was raised above the level of the earth, but the raised part was not more than 3 feet long. At the head was placed a piece of a canoe (probably a bark basket) and a spear and round the grave were several little baskets made of the fan-palm leaf, which, from their small size, we thought had been placed there by the children of the departed. Nothing could exceed the neatness of the whole; the sand and earth were cleared away from the sides and not a shrub or weed was suffered to grow within the area."[60]

I have quoted Sir Gordon Bremer's description in full because it shows that, even after a hundred and thirty years, the aborigines of Melville Island,

[60] Bremer, 1843. From this description it would appear that Bremer chanced to see a grave not long after the aborigines had completed the final rituals. Had any time elapsed the whole area would have been covered with grass and leaves, for, after the *pukamuni* ceremonies, nobody is interested in either the grave or the poles.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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where they have not suffered from ecclesiastic prohibitions, are still using a [178] similar form of grave and posts.

Major Campbell (1834, p. 158), writing of a grave he saw on Melville Island in 1826, states: "It (the grave) is surrounded by upright poles, many of which are formed at the top like lances and halberts, 14–15 feet high, and between these the spears and waddies (probably of the deceased) are stuck upright in the ground."

Brown (1905, p. 28) found a grave on Luxmore Head, in Apsley Straits surrounded . . . "by wooden slabs, portions of which had been burnt. Aboriginal markings were faintly discernible in places on the wood, some of the posts had the wood cut away from the outside toward the centre, leaving a short spike standing up in the middle of the post."

Klaatsch (1907, p. 257), in referring to the same burial poles at Luxmore Head, writes: "In some examples the slab was so carved that the upper part was only connected with the lower by two thin pillars or, on others, the top was mushroom-shaped.

"It is easy to see that the aborigines used fire for this work of sculpture, scratching the burnt part away with shell."

Basedow,[99] in 1911, came across a grave of an infant, on Bathurst Island, surrounded by five simply decorated posts, which had "been cut and carved with a sharp bladed instrument, in all probability a tomahawk."

Basedow persuaded the aborigines to renovate the designs, which did not vary greatly from those in use at the present day.

[114] Spencer,[100] in 1911, made sketches of many of the burial poles, and arranged for the aborigines to redecorate a group which was later displayed in the [177] National Museum, Melbourne. He states (1928, p. 682) that: "It (the pole) was slowly and laboriously cut with an iron tomahawk, but formerly with a sharp shell, until it has the form decided upon by the artificer."

Dr. Kenneth Fry, who visited Melville Island in 1913, was the first investigator to ascertain the meanings of a number of poles. These, with his permission, are illustrated on Fig. 8. All of these shapes, but two, are those still most commonly used among the hundred or more which I saw on Melville Island.

[115] An old aboriginal, *Tjamalampua*, told me that in *palaneri* times, i.e., a long while ago, before there were any steel axes, the aborigines used stone axes to fell the hollow trees for *pukamuni* poles. Although there were just as many poles around the grave as there are today, they were neither as

[99] Basedow (1913), p. 314, Fig. 4, Pls. 13, 14, 16, 17, 18.
[100] Spencer (1928), p. 682, Figs. 471–7, Pl. X.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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recorded on the expedition, however, indicates that this may not be so, i.e., 532^x 765

Forks or limbs of trees	26 per cent
Breasts of women	9 per cent
Rocks on sea-coast	18 per cent
Windows and doors (openings in poles)	15 per cent

That is, four shapes make up 68 per cent and the remaining eleven shapes, 32 per cent.

This would suggest that certain shapes have a traditional meaning, and that these shapes predominate. In fact, an examination of the accounts of the early travellers, Bremer, Campbell, Klaatsch, and Spencer, suggests that, except for those poles in the form of human figures, the *pukamuni* poles have not changed in shape to any extent during the last fifty years or more. [114] [178]

Description of the Burial Poles

(a) *The Pukamuni of Waniamperi*

The ten *tudinis* which the "workers" cut and painted for *Waniamperi's pukamuni* were looked upon as a family, a man, his two wives, and their children.

Pl. 32J, a middle-aged man, had two wives; Pl. 34E, a very fat, but young woman, and Pl. 35A, B, her much older sister.

The young wife, Pl. 34E, had three children; Pl. 36A, B, a small boy about ten, Pl. 36D, a girl of twelve, and Pl. 37D, a young married woman without a family.

The older wife, Pl. 35A, B, had four children; Pl. 36F, a boy of five, Pl. 36C, a girl about twelve, Pl. 32H, a young unmarried man, and Pl. 37D, an unmarried woman.

Plate 32J, eighteen feet in height, was by far the tallest pole in the group.

Because the actual shapes of the poles seldom had any relationship to the designs painted on them, the pole shapes and the painted designs will be described separately.

The pole shapes of Pl. 32J are: the projection, *c*, on the top, represents the branch of a tree, the bosses, *a*, *a*, *a*, are the breasts of women, the three cylindrical sections, *m*, *m*, *m*, large rocks on the sea-coast, and the narrow uprights, *n*, *n*, joining them, the limbs of eucalyptus trees.

In the painted designs, *a*, *a*, *a*, are, as before, the breasts of women, and the short vertical lines, *b*, *b*, etc., the teeth of a comb. The painted white projection, *c*, on the top of the pole, is a shovel-nosed shark; the crossed circles, *d*, *d*, are the noses of crocodiles, and the diagonal bands, *e*, *e*, *e*, the

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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CHAPTER IV

The Kulama Ceremony

114 881 Although little has been recorded about the colourful *pukamani* burial rituals of the Tiwi, several investigators have published details of the *kulama* ceremony.

Spencer saw a *kulama* ceremony during March 1912. His records of those rituals (Spencer, 1928, pp. 658–76), the most complete we have, show that, [178] during the last forty years the pattern has not changed to any extent. Although the names of the initiation grades given by Spencer do not agree with those recorded by later investigators, it is likely these differences are due to Spencer's interpreter, the buffalo shooter, Joe Cooper, who was not then fully conversant with the ceremony.

Fry (1949, p. 176), during 1913, witnessed an initiation ceremony in which Reuben Cooper, Joe Cooper's half-caste son, passed from the *Kolloponiati* (my *Kilipaniati*) stage to that of a *Wadjeniati*.

In the same year Fry (1950, pp. 79–80), saw the closing phases of the *kulama* from the peeling of the yam (p. 138), to the final rituals (p. 142). Although Fry was mistaken in considering that this ceremony was part of a burial rite, his record is a valuable and accurate description of the last two days of the *kulama*.

Hart (1930, p. 286), recorded the *kulama* initiation names and the duration of the grades of both male and female initiates. These names correspond closely to those I was able to obtain from the fully initiated men, with one exception. Hart stated that the grade of *Mikingula*, i.e., the fully initiated, lasted for four years. This is obviously incorrect, as the *Mikingula*, being the final grade, lasts for life.

178 881 It appears certain that Tiwi initiation has ceased, although, I feel sure, within comparatively recent times. The *Mikingulas* often talked about initiating some of their companions, but when the opportunity came, they procrastinated.

115 881 However, the same fully initiated men gave me full details of the rituals at each stage of initiation, explained how those rituals fitted into the *kulama* rituals we had witnessed, and either decorated themselves, or painted designs

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Grades of Kulama initiates		Period of initiation
Mikinatrina Mikinatrininga	Male Female	2 years
Mikintara Mikintaringa	Male Female	From one kulama until the next
Mikiatarima Mikiatarimiṅga	Male Female	From one kulama until the next
Mikingula Mikingulinga	Male Female	Fully initiated for life

2. THE PRELIMINARY RITUALS OF THE KULAMA

881 (1) *The Capture of the Marukumuni Initiate*

According to my informants, any tribesman chosen for initiation, must be a mature man, usually married and with children. In fact, all the men pointed out to me as being suitable candidates were thirty years of age or older.[18]

The first time there is a gathering of people after a *kulama* ceremony, such as at a burial, or an *ilania*,[19] the fully initiated *kulama* men, the *Mikingulas*, ask the permission of the leader of the *kulama*, the *Naripikilitipi*, to capture any man or woman, who is suitable for the first stage of initiation, that of the *Marukumuni*.[20] In preparation for this, the *Mikingulas* have already mixed a quantity of yellow ochre.

At a given signal, one of the *Mikingulas*, who has been standing unobtrusively near, suddenly throws his arms around the chosen initiate. The captive struggles to release himself, protesting against being initiated into the *kulama*. But a number of the *Mikingulas* rush to their companion's aid, lay [302] [301] the struggling initiate on the ground, paint a design, in yellow, on his upper arms and body (Pl. 42A), and put the red tail feathers of a black cockatoo in his hair. Meanwhile, other initiated men are walking around the group

[178] [114] [18] The age of initiation has been raised since Spencer and Fry saw the *kulama* in the early days of the century. Spencer (1928, p. 665) refers to young boys, while Reuben Cooper, whom I knew in 1920 as a young man about twenty, would have only been about thirteen years of age when Fry saw him as a *Kilipaniati*.

[19] A preliminary ceremony for the burial rituals.

[20] I do not know who captures the female initiate, the *Marakununinga*.

10:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1962 O120 Tiwi O120

discussed the factor of relative age as a major determinant of unilateral cross-cousin marriage in the particular type of contract which is universal for first marriages among females and is also the preferred contract for males. I have also described several variant patterns of Tiwi marriage contracts and have shown that these cannot be considered as alternatives to the preferred type but rather as additional patterns which apply only to a woman's secondary marriages. These additional types of contracts are also, to some extent, conditioned by the relative ages of the participants, but the resultant form of marriage may vary from a continuance of patrilateral cross-cousin marriage to matrilateral cross-cousin marriage and even to marriage with certain relatives who are not cross-cousins. The wide variation in contracts leading to secondary marriages for women does not affect the continuance of preferred unilateral cross-cousin marriage or the exchange of wives between particular descent and local groups until the second generation after the variant marriage. Consequently, any change in the social organization of the Tiwi brought about by variations in marriage contracts is a gradual change, but it is also an inevitable and accepted form of change. The Tiwi rightly consider that as individuals they have considerable freedom in the selection of mates from almost any descent and local group and even from among a number of categories of kinsmen. Their Ego-oriented marriage system provides both stability and flexibility, and this is reflected in their system of kin classification.

NOTES

1. The field work on which this paper is based was undertaken in 1954 at the Snake Bay Native Settlement on Melville Island and was jointly financed by the National Geographic Society and the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.
2. In 1959, I used the relative age of spouses in a preliminary analysis of Tiwi unilateral cross-cousin marriage (Goodale 1959). It was with considerable pleasure that I found that a similar analysis by Rose (1960) had quite independently arrived at the same conclusions. Even more interesting was the fact that in cases where I had to calculate expected ages for many of my kin relations, Rose, with more complete age data, could give the average and range in ages for the same relatives, and that in most cases his "average" and my "estimated" ages were the same or within one or two years of one another.
3. For their valuable comments, criticisms, and advice I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to Robbins Burling, Ward H. Goodenough, Edward B. Harper, Barbara S. Lane, and George P. Murdock.
4. Unfortunately, since the only age data collected in the field were for husbands and wives, I have had to use expected ages rather than average or mean ages throughout most of this paper (see note 2 above).
5. The Tiwi believe that sexual intercourse is the direct and only cause of menarche.

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11:Goodale E-S (1954, 1962) 1963 CI20 Tiwi CI20

Tiwi invoke the power of a yam

By JANE C. GOODALE

IN 1912 SIR BALDWIN SPENCER, a professor of biology at the University of Melbourne, visited Melville Island, in the Timor Sea. There he observed a Tiwi tribal ceremony in which a number of young boys and girls participated in the ritual preparation of a species of yam the Tiwi called *Kulama*. Spencer wrote of this ceremony, "initiation of young men [and women] on Melville Island is intimately associated with what is known as a yam ceremony." This statement is particularly noteworthy, for, in 1954, when I visited the Tiwi for the first time and witnessed the annual *Kulama* ceremony, no initiates took part. The ceremony, however, was still being performed with no significant changes in the complex ritual procedures that Spencer had described more than forty years before.

That the *Kulama* ceremony can and does take place without initiates does not mean that Spencer was wrong to consider it an important part of initiation into adult life. It does mean that many of the new generation of Tiwi believe that such participation cannot prepare them adequately for a way of life that has been radically changed by contact with Western culture during the past fifty years.

In order to understand what this ceremony means to those who still perform it, one must first understand what the Tiwi consider to be adulthood. The Tiwi, now about a thousand in number, have lived for untold centuries on Melville and Bathurst Islands, which are situated thirty miles north of Darwin, the capital city of Australia's Northern Territory. The islands and surrounding waters are well supplied with food, and fresh water is plentiful. Economically and technically the Tiwi have been remarkably conservative. They came to the islands as hunters and gatherers of wild food, using crude chipped stone axes, digging sticks, simple wooden spears, and hunting dogs, and found that little else was needed to exploit the natural resources and to provide themselves with a stable, varied, and adequate diet. With the exception of the wallaby, the land animals of the two islands were small and nocturnal and could simply be collected during the day with little physical effort or skill. The few skills that were necessary were identifying tracks to find game and chopping out or digging up the sleeping animals. Young boys and girls were taught these techniques, since there was no essential sexual division of labor in food-collecting. Boys, however, re-

TIWI NATIVE on Melville Island expresses a grievance in an original song during the annual three-day *Kulama* ceremony.

11:Goodale E-8 (1954, 1962) 1963 C120 Tiwi C120

884 tive, community ceremony, its benefits accrued only to individual participants, and then only to those who had followed the complex procedures correctly. Thus it was vitally important to every Tiwi individual, male or female, to receive instruction in the *Kulama* ritual before being considered a fully adult member of the tribe. The instruction period lasted six years, during which the initiates, among other requirements, had to participate actively in six *Kulama* rituals. Following this training, the individuals were considered responsible adults by other members of the tribe, but only through continued participation in the ritual could that condition be maintained.

● [178] TODAY the ritual is still performed by those who believe in it, and it will probably continue until the last initiated Tiwi dies, or until the underlying meaning is totally lost and is replaced by ideas of how to be successful that have their origins in Western thought.

[062] [054] The ceremony itself takes three days to complete and centers on the preparation of a toxic variety of yam, the *Kulama*. To make this yam edible, it must first be soaked. It is then baked, mashed, and again soaked for a time in fresh water. Even after the poisons have been removed by this elaborate process, an extremely bitter taste remains. The Tiwi say they never eat the yam except at the conclusion of the *Kulama* ceremony. Those who believe in the [178] ritual say the yam has tremendous power for causing good or evil, and thus one must handle the yam carefully during the preparation, speak to it softly, sing to it at times, and always treat it with respect. The individual absorbs the power of the yam by touching it, by rubbing the body with it, and finally by eating it. All these steps are ritualized. [462] Special digging sticks are made, and, contrary to the usual practice of having the women gather plants, only men

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 13(B)...Analyst]

[P. 12, (C)]

884 194 the technique had to be made meaningful to the initiates, the lifesaving qualities of this famine food were explained as health-giving powers. A ceremony accompanied by song and dance was certainly a dramatic and effective means of impressing the initiates in preparation methods. The ritual served another purpose as well: because traveling is so [180] difficult during the rainy season, each household is isolated from the others. The *Kulama* ritual follows this period, and it is natural to expect a reunion to be an occasion to exchange news, settle differences, and tell stories or sing songs that keep traditions alive.

885 MUCH harder to account for is the Tiwi idea of adulthood. That every adult is solely responsible for his own health and wealth, and that success in life depends entirely on personal behavior and industry, are ideals [171] strangely similar to those that underlie the American way of life, despite the great gulf between the aboriginal culture and our own. But it is not at all surprising that the Tiwi 177 have a great sympathy for much of Western civilization. Many hold the same views as the *Kulama* singer quoted earlier in this article who saw his children wearing clothes [181] and shoes and going to school to learn to write, for this is the Tiwi's contemporaneous idea of success in a way of life introduced to them only a few short years ago.

Early in the summer of 1962 I revisited the Tiwi for [14] two weeks. Although I knew that the Tiwi desired schooling and training in European ways of life and would seize any such opportunity afforded them, I was hardly prepared for the tremendous changes that had taken place during the eight years that had elapsed since my first visit.

Three months after the *Kulama* ceremony of 1954, a [871] government school was opened. Now all the Tiwi children go to school, and some who have finished the six-year program in the government school have received subsequent training as teaching or nursing assistants. Some others have had "on-the-job" training in various activities connected with a large-scale forestry project that has been started on Melville Island. In fact, all the able-bodied Tiwi men and women are currently employed, and their tasks bear little or no relation to their old life in the bush.

It is perhaps significant—but to me not at all surprising—that I did not hear a single real complaint from the Tiwi regarding their new manner of living. They seem to like it and are anticipating bigger and better things (in the [224] Western sense) for their children. Hunting has become [868] a week-end diversion and the children receive little or no real instruction in that traditional skill.

●178 784 SOME aspects of Tiwi life are slow to die, however. Most of the old taboos, the observance of which was considered necessary in the past in order to insure health and wealth, are still observed, although at least one teen-ager expressed doubt that the taboos had any actual effect on the outcome of one's life. Western medicine and public 197 health practices are fast replacing belief in the *Kulama*. 884 During the past eight years only three men have begun the six years of training for *Kulama* initiation, and some of the older men no longer participate in the ceremony. However, as long as even a small number of Tiwi believe in the *Kulama*, the ritual will survive, but I doubt that it will for long.

000 NEAR END of *Kulama* ceremony, performer, although hoarse and tired, must continue to sing until late in the night. [P. 16, (B)]